

LARGE-SCALE MILITARY EXERCISES BEGUN IN KALININGRAD REGION

KALININGRAD, Aug 23, BNS - While German defense minister Volker Ruhe was visiting the Baltics this week, large-scale military exercises were begun on Tuesday in the Kaliningrad region. The Russian 11th army defended a beachhead which was subjected to a simulated attack by 50 ships and 20 helicopters as well as by navy planes.

RUSSIAN MP WANTS NEW BASES AGREEMENT WITH BALTIC STATES

TALLINN, Aug 21, BNS - Member of the Russian State Parliament Yuri Voyevoda thinks Russia should conclude a new bases agreement with Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, thus providing a guarantee to the protection of Russian economic and political interests in the Baltic area. Voyevoda says it was premature of Russia to abandon its naval bases in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. In his words, the Russian navy should have a foothold also in the Baltic countries, in addition to its bases in the Kaliningrad and Leningrad oblasts.

NATO HAS NO TIMETABLE FOR EASTERN EXPANSION-REPORT

BONN, Aug 20 (Reuter) - NATO's draft plan for expanding into central and eastern Europe contains neither a timetable nor precise criteria for absorbing new members eager to join the Western military alliance, Der Spiegel reported on Sunday. It also suggested NATO members were happy to put off any concrete talks with potential applicants until 1997 -- after presidential elections in Russia and the United States and after the European Union's conference to shape itself for the future. Spiegel said NATO had informally agreed to take on new members in three stages. The third and final group of countries would include Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, with pressure expected on other Eastern European states preceding these countries into NATO not to veto the Baltic republics' admission as well.